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Retsil nursing staff take the benchmarking survey following a briefing about LEAP from DNS Billie Pendleton and Ed Dolle.

LEAP... Taking the First Step

More than 400 LEAP Specialists from hundreds of Senior Living and Long Term Care communities in 26 states have completed the train-the-trainer workshops in the past three years. Now WDVA is taking the LEAP as well.

LEAP is an all-inclusive workforce advancement program that empowers staff, increases retention, and promotes staff-resident relationships through a model of resident-centered care, which emphasizes personal choice, self-responsibility, optimism, and self-direction.

Each Veterans home has identified two key people that have completed an 18 hour train-the-trainer workshop through the Mather LifeWays Company. These individuals have learned how to be effective leaders, with good communication skills and mentoring techniques. Currently, we are in the Pre-LEAP implementation process of training all the licensed staff. All nursing personnel have filled out a brief survey which was submitted for analysis by the Mather LifeWays Institute on Aging research team. This report will give us a valuable benchmark to compare our successes to in the future. When all the nursing staff have been through the training process, the homes will be on their way to achieving:

- ◆ An improved resident satisfaction with the quality of life;
- ◆ Increased recognition in the community for the quality of care provided;
- ◆ A more professional staff with increased morale and pride; and
- ◆ A competitive edge against the growing nursing shortage.

Residents will be able to make more choices in their daily lives like, having a bath or a shower; when to have a bath, in the morning or evening; or choosing bed times and meal times.

The need to recruit, train, and retain qualified healthcare professionals in gerontology and long-term care is intensifying with the growth of an aging population. High turnover rates hinder delivery of high quality care and increase operating expenses.

"Working in a Long-Term Care community takes an enormous physical and emotional toll on caregivers," said DNS Billie Pendleton. "We get very attached to the residents just like family members do, we become completely involved with their aging progress, which can be emotionally draining. The LEAP program will give us a set of self-care tools to reduce stress and improve coping skills through a variety of healthy behaviors."

LEAP is an acronym corresponding to the program goals:

Learn how to build strong relationships among nursing, residents, and families

Empower nursing staff and create structures for advancement

Achieve staff development and retention goals

Produce measurable outcomes

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By WDVA Director John E. Lee

Veteran's Home Survey Completed

Congratulations to the Washington Veterans Home staff! The State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) recently completed their annual survey of the facility and found zero deficiencies in nursing and clinical care services. This is a remarkable accomplishment and underscores the dedication of all staff members at the Veterans Home.

WDVA Completes PDPs!

All staff members of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs recently completed their Performance Development Plans. This is a significant accomplishment for our 600 employees and the first time in the history of our agency that all staff have had their plans completed!

Each quarter, supervisors and managers will have the opportunity to meet with their employee work-groups and review where employees are in meeting their goals.

I want to take a moment to commend all WDVA staff for taking this important step toward building a system of performance accountability!

Deputy Director Participates in Thurston County Homeless Count

On January 26, volunteers set out to count the number of homeless people and families in Thurston County. Among those volunteers was Alfie Alvarado, WDVA Deputy Director.

This year, one of the questions asked of the homeless was, 'Are you a Veteran?'. Results from the survey are expected soon and will help us better understand the need for homeless services targeted to veterans.

Many Counties across the state conducted similar counts, in part because participating in the count process makes them eligible for additional funding under a new state law.

Emergency Preparedness

Being prepared for emergencies, whether on an individual, business or government level is becoming increasingly complex.

At WDVA we feel that being prepared starts with each individual employee. Following an emergency, we know that employees will be able to provide better care and service to veterans if they are also prepared to provide for their family at home.

Since launching "Operation - Ready To Serve" last fall, each of you have received a lot of emergency preparedness information and had the opportunity to put together a disaster kit. It is our sincere hope that should an emergency arise, you and your family members are now better prepared to safeguard yourselves.

But, what about outside the family?

How do we prepare for emergencies of all types at work, school, within our cities, counties and states?

One of the most important lessons our country is coping with is that every incident or disaster has to have mutual partners working together and depending on each other.

That's where the National Incident Management System – NIMS – comes in.

To provide standards for domestic incident response, the Secretary of Homeland Security was authorized to develop NIMS in February 2003.

As the system has progressed, requirements have been set for each city, county and state to become involved. By training their personnel and implementing the necessary changes, different departments within the same jurisdiction will be able to work together, communicate with each other and depend on each other.

WDVA and other state agencies are currently training key staff members and merging existing emergency plans to insure the safety of our residents, our customers and our staff.

Budget Update

In addition to a number of policy changes made by passing House and Senate Bills, the Legislature also passed a Supplemental Operating and Capital Budget. While there are exciting changes to some of our programs serving veterans and their families that will take effect on July 1, 2006, we must continue looking for ways to control expenditures in order to balance our budget for the fiscal year that ends on June 30, 2006.

Why must we watch spending so closely when we received increases in the 2006 Supplemental Budget?

The 2006 Supplemental Budgets (both Operating & Capital) do not go into effect until July 1, 2006; therefore, those funds are not available to use until July 1. The Fiscal Year budget we're currently working with ends on June 30, 2006.

It is also important to note that 2006 Supplemental Budget funds are targeted toward specific programs and are not simply additional resources for the agency to use. So even after July 1, we will need to continue closely monitoring our expenditures.

Why are we having trouble staying within our budget for Fiscal Year 2005?

WDVA has accomplished great things this year; however, the projected start up costs for both the new facility at Retsil and the new kitchen in Spokane were very conservative and actual costs were more than projected.

In addition, significant increases in fuel and heating costs mean we're paying much larger bills than we originally budgeted for.

As a result, we need to be very cautious with our spending in order to end the year with a balanced budget.

When will the budget writing process start again?

This summer, as the Strategic Plan is developed, we will also develop the 2007-2009 biennial budget. In November, we will have the ability to request funds from the Governor's Office and Legislature to maintain our high quality of service in all our facilities, service centers and offices. (However, we must also remember that no matter what we ask for in our budget, we must always live within the budget provided by the Governor and State Legislature!)

What are the changes included in the 2006 Supplemental Budget?

Operating Budget:

- \$1.5 million to open the last 40 bed wing at Retsil;
- \$500,000 to serve more National Guard Returnees.
- \$100,000 to assist veterans through the Veterans Conservation Corps.
- \$2 million to implement 2SHB 2754, the Veterans Innovations Program.
- \$82,000 to pay for increased utility costs at the Veterans Homes.
- Smart Buy Initiative – the Office of Financial Management is calculating how to spread each agency's share of projected savings through

Smart Buy. This will result in a reduction to our final budget.

Capital Budget

- \$170,000 (and the authority to request \$318,000 in matching funds from the federal VA) to remodel building 9 at Retsil; and
- Mandate to develop a 10 year business plan for a State Veterans Cemetery in eastern WA.

If you have questions about the WDVA Budget, please contact Gary Condra, Chief Financial Officer at garyc@dva.wa.gov or 1-800-562-0132.

Legislative Review

The 2006 Legislature adjourned one day early, using 59 of the 60 days allowed for the regular session.

A list of bills affecting WDVA and Washington's Veterans is available on the V-Net or the WDVA Web Page by clicking on Legislative Updates.

Some changes for state employees include:

EHB 1383 – requires the public employees benefits board to develop health savings accounts with a high-deductible health plan.

HB 2681 – sets a process for determining the minimum employer and employee contribution rates beginning in 2009 for PERS, of 80% of normal cost using the entry age actuarial method.

SHB 2684 – allows PERS 3 employees to be considered 'vested' after five years of service, with at least one year after age 44.

HB 2690 - Permits members of the Public Employees' Plans 1, 2 and 3, to purchase up to five years of service credit. Allows the service credit to be purchased at time of retirement at full actuarial cost. Allows a member purchasing service to pay for all or part of the cost with a transfer from an eligible retirement account.

SHB 2780 – Allows payroll deductions made to a labor or employee organization also to be made to any funds, committees, or subsidiary organizations maintained by that labor or employee organization.

SB 6264 - Allows an injured worker entitled to an industrial insurance permanent total disability pension to change his or her pension option if the worker's designated beneficiary dies or the worker becomes divorced from the designated beneficiary.

For additional information on any of these measures, please visit: www1.leg.wa.gov or contact Heidi Audette at heidia@dva.wa.gov or 1-800-562-0132.

What's New With ADL?

Recently our ADL program was upgraded from a system that didn't include Pharmacy billing, to a new system with an integrated Pharmacy component. (ADL is the computer software for medical services and billing.)

The upgrade was extremely complex and required the pharmacy staff and ADL team members to work with the creators of ADL to devise this program. In the end, we now have a product that is better suited toward our agency's specific needs.

Because Medicare Part D was also being implemented for many residents, this change-over was

pushed months ahead of schedule creating a huge workload for the pharmacy staff. They spent many, many hours inputting new drug data on each resident, at the same time continuing to process the daily drug orders using the old system.

But the results will be worth the effort! This Pharmacy implementation will save pharmacy staff, medical records staff and medical billing staff from duplicating data entry work they were doing before and decrease the likelihood of making mistakes.

Now that it's up and working properly, the pharmacists can directly communicate on-line with

each personal drug plan when they place drug orders...a "one time" data entry. The new system also allows pharmacists to access a perpetual inventory instead of an annual inventory, something the auditors have requested.

"The Pharmacy team should be commended for this magnificent accomplishment of implementing the ADL Pharmacy module. The tireless efforts from them and those that assisted during this very complex project are the epitome of commitment and teamwork. It has been a privilege to work with them on this project," said Dale Cain, ADL System Administrator.

Baldrige Leadership Team Update

The Baldrige Leadership Team would like to thank everyone who participated in the Employee Self Assessment (survey) focus groups. You had great recommendations.

Below is a snapshot of some focus group concepts and our team's next steps.

Category 2 - Strategic Planning

Focus groups said staff need to know what a Strategic Plan is and how it relates to their work. In addition, focus groups told us they would like to provide input into the agency Strategic Plan.

Action: The Baldrige Leadership team is developing ways to communicate the Strategic Plan (The Strategic Plan is due May 1st). In addition, ideas will be generated for the next Strategic Planning Cycle focused on how to get more staff input to the plan prior to publication.

Category 6 – Process Management

Focus groups said there is no consistent method of sharing information. They often do not receive information at all.

Action: The Baldrige Leadership Team is reviewing current communication methods and the type of information currently provided. They will develop a plan showing how information is, or can be shared at various levels.

Most Process Management recommendations are location specific, examples are:

- Residents need to be assessed and care planned for correct brief size. (Sometimes, one shift will use Medium, another shift will use Large, etc.)
- Have inter-shift meetings to ensure staff are focused on solutions for residents needs.
- If a group wants to change a process, those changes need to be shared with staff responsible for the work prior to the change. This will help by ensuring everyone's input is considered and the full impact of the change is understood.

Action: Each Baldrige Leadership Team member will work on their locations Process Management ideas with their Management Team.

Other

Focus groups said they would like a way to share their process improvement ideas.

Action: Suggestion boxes will be implemented at all four locations.

Focus groups said they would like to have informal access to the Executive Leadership.

Action: Quarterly brown bag lunches with the Director and Deputy Director will be held at all four locations. These will be very informal open door discussions where staff can drop in for a few minutes or their whole lunch break.

Preparing WDVA for the Pandemic Flu

Sally Shunn, Infection control officer/clinician at the Veterans Home recently attended a community forum on How to Prepare for the Pandemic Influenza.

"With recent national attention on the danger of pandemic and avian flu (bird flu), people need to know how to protect themselves, their families, and their businesses," said Shunn.

According to Kitsap County Health District, the threat of pandemic flu is real. We know from history that it's not a matter of "if", but "when". Shunn attended the forum to learn more about the pandemic/avian flu season, what our healthcare facilities needs to do to prepare and where to turn for additional information.

The Washington State Sentinel Nursing Home Influenza Surveillance Program Shunn is involved with is very important in identifying virus strains that are active in our state, promoting quick diagnosis and early prevention, projecting future vaccination needs and many other related areas that assist Washington in keeping our population safe and healthy. Shunn also has a nine year affiliation with the International APIC Association and has been the local Olympic Peninsula Chapter #122 President for five years. APIC is the Association of Professionals in Infection Control and

Epidemiology, Inc and is an internationally recognized association in infection prevention matters and legislation, lobbying in both Olympia and in WA D.C. on issues affecting all when it comes to infections and spreading germs/ viruses. When you think of CDC and WHO, APIC follows right behind in mission and vision.

Shunn is happy to report that the January 2006 Influenza chart reflects a decline in positive results and no school absenteeism or nursing home influenza-like illness has been reported for several weeks. She also has established a action plan for the agency in preparation for future flu outbreaks.

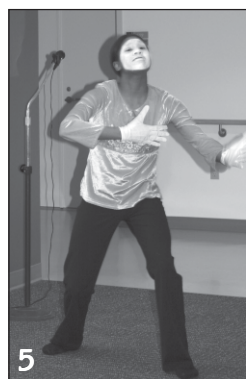
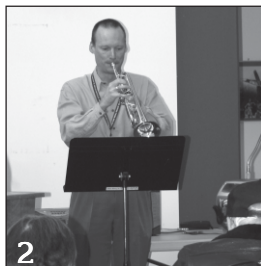
Please contact Sally if you would like more information about preparation steps and respiratory hygiene etiquette strategies. Remember Sally always says, **"Washing your hands is your best protection!"**



Sally Shunn stands by the Certificate of Appreciation given to the WVH for her participation in the WA State Sentinel Nursing Home Influenza Surveillance Program.

Retsil Home is Full of Talented People

During the Retsil Talent show on March 10, several talented staffers and their family members entertained a large crowd. We saw people with fancy foot work and listened to an inspirational speech from General Patton. 14 residents also shared their talents with the audience.



1. Brenda McCormick's daughter Megan sang *I will Survive*.

2. Pharmacist Dave Smith played 2 numbers by Bach on his trumpet.

3. Rec Specialist Rosanne Carlson sang a song, accompanied by Glen Morrison. 4. Custodian Beverly Church played the piano with Paris Wolf who regularly performs at the home.

7. We were all inspired by General Patton's (Gary Contos, son-in-law of Richard Slocum) speech. 8. Danny Jones' grandson, Steven performed a balancing act, using flags, a chair, a baseball bat and a very long stick on his chin.

5. Mike Lawrence's daughter Christina performed a beautiful mime & dance. 6. Liz Berens & company showed us 3 different dance numbers.

Meet new staffers



Staff Development Coordinator for Orting

Lisa Benton graduated cum laude from Pacific Lutheran University in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree, while mothering five children ages 12 to 2yrs. She has a variety of nursing

experiences: Emergency room, Post Surgical Recovery, School Nurse, Home Health Case Manager, MDS Coordinator/Case Manager in LTC. She has two semesters of graduate school completed for family nurse practitioner, which is currently on hold for now.

Lisa says she enjoys the outdoors, is grateful for the privilege of friendships and family, and has had a wonderful start at the WSH!



Meet Garry Hodgson

Garry and his wife, Carol moved here from Colorado, where he was born and raised, about 14 months ago. Recently they purchased a 100 year old house in Everett and are in the process of remodeling. They have three daughters and five grandchildren all back in Colorado.

Garry is a Navy veteran, with undergraduate degrees in Human Services and Social Work. His Masters work is in Public Administration. For 12 years, he owned an agency that provided domestic violence and alcohol/drug treatment services to court ordered offenders. He's been in that field for 22 years. Garry's first job in the helping professions was working for Veterans Outreach in Denver providing services to Vets incarcerated in the Federal prison. Garry is currently working for WDVA in Seattle, assisting with the Veterans Incarcerated Program.



Switzer joins Transitional Program Development Team

Ray and Connie Switzer arrived in the Pacific Northwest in 1986 along with three daughters and twin boys. Ray began serving veterans immediately upon arrival by volunteering time in a downtown Seattle shelter. Ray moved on to

become Chief Executive Officer for Veterans Independent Enterprise of Washington (V.I.E.W.) for over 10 years. This organization assisted over 1,400 homeless Veterans during that period of time in a

Transitional Model Environment. V.I.E.W. achieved national recognition under Ray's team work style leadership.

In 2004 Ray accepted a position with American GI Forum-National Veterans Out-reach Program in Texas. It is with very glad hearts that the Switzer's returned to Washington and employment with WDVA. Ray is currently assisting in the development of Patriot's Pride (a 501C-3 Not-For-Profit Organization) solely to assist Veterans and their immediate families, as well as being a part of the development team currently working on a Veterans Transitional Model at Washington Veterans Home.



HR Position Filled

Brad Conly began his state career with the Department of Corrections (DOC) in 1990 and soon moved into human resources work. During nine years with DOC, he worked in four separate facilities and the headquarters office in increasingly responsible roles.

The last seven years has been spent as a Human Resource Consultant with the Department of Information Services. Welcome Brad to WDVA.

Others who joined WDVA recently:

Ceola Gladney, Office Asst. Temp 1 day week

Carla Summers, NAC-1

Kathleen Goins, Reg. Clinical Dietician

Joyce Silver, NAC-1

Jennifer Fisher, NAC-1

Brenda Rogers, NAC-1

James LeBlanc, RN 2

Susan Williams, RN 2

Carmen Piper, Cook 2

Richard Schoen, VBS 1

Adrielle Johnson, FSA1

Lisa Benton, RN3 Staff Development

Erin Williams, NAC-1

Michelle Eyler, Non-perm Pharm Asst A

Burnaze Betancourt, FSA1

Dawn Delgado, LW 1

Debra Hagstrom, LW 1

Alan Harris, RN 2

Brad Conly, HRC

Employees who Retired

Chuck Wetmore, Trades Helper -Retired with 41+ years all at Retsil.

HRMS Conversion Payroll – Emergency Response

Effective April 1, 2006, WDVA will be changing over to the new HRMS system (payroll and personnel system). It is not anticipated you will experience any problems with your paycheck. However, if you do encounter a problem, we are here to fix it ASAP. **Here's what to do!**

Immediately contact Payroll
ASAP

Your representatives are
Central Office & Veterans Svcs.
& Washington Veterans Home
Liza Narcisco (360) 725-2217
Washington Soldiers Home &
Spokane Veterans Home –
Sandy Moloney (360) 725-2203
Toll Free **1-800-562-0132**

Your representative will
complete an A-19 and
send it to the
Treasurers Office to
get a warrant.

Your check will be
delivered to you or
deposited for you the
next business day.

If it is essential that you
have money the same
day, the Impressed
funds will be used.

Contact
Your representative
and HR Manager at the
location you work to
receive your check
from the impressed
fund.

Need a reason to Celebrate? Here are several

March is:

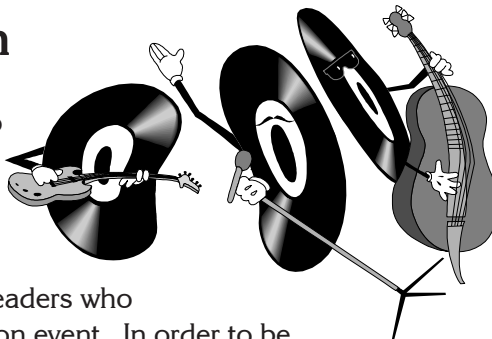
- ♣ Women's History Month
- ♣ Irish American Heritage Month
- ♣ National Multiple Sclerosis
Education & Awareness Month
- ♣ National Professional Social
Work Month
- ♣ 1st - Ash Wednesday
- ♣ 15th - Chili Cook-off - CO
- ♣ 17th - St. Patrick's Day
- ♣ 20th - First day of Spring
- ♣ 25th Congressional Medal of
Honor Day
- ♣ 30th - National Doctor's Day

April is:

- Alcohol Awareness Month
- National Autism Awareness
Month
- National Occupational Therapy
Month
- National Parkinson's Awareness
Month
- 1st - April Fool's Day
- 2nd - Daylight saving time
begins
- 9th - Palm Sunday
- 9th - Former POW Recognition
Day
- 13th - Passover
- 14th - Good Friday
- 15th - Income Tax Day
- 16th - Easter Sunday
- 22nd - Earth Day
- 23rd - Orthodox Easter
- 27th - Take Our Daughters and
Sons to Work Day
- 28th - Arbor Day
- April 23rd-29th - National
Volunteer Week
- April 23rd-29th - Administrative
Professionals Week

PSRW Presents the 8th Annual Talent Competition

If you (or your group) like to sing, dance, or tell jokes, then it's time to step on stage and compete with your peers. The competition is judged by a select group of agency and legislative leaders who score the finalists at the celebration event. In order to be eligible, you must be a state employee and submit your audio/video tape/CD, with a vocal number no longer than 4 minutes to:



Jeana Gillis

PO Box 40021/Mail Stop 40021

Olympia, WA 98504-0021

DEADLINE: April 14, 2006

PSRW is a celebration recognizing the contributions made by public service professionals. Finalist will be chosen based on performance. Please include your name, agency, address, e-mail, and work phone number with your recording. Finalists must perform on May 3rd at Heritage Park in Olympia with recorded accompaniment only. Finalist will be notified by April 26, 2006.

Call 360-902-0374 for more information.

Reflections on 26 Years At The Washington Veterans Home



By Chaplain Ron Hempel

It was the middle of August, 1979 when I first came to work at the Washington Veterans Home. There was a huge welcome banner hanging in the square. What a warm reception for me I thought. I believe it wasn't until the

following year that I realized that the welcome banner was hung in the square every August for the annual Home picnic! I was, however, given a very warm reception by residents and staff alike.

That warm reception has lasted throughout all these years. I came to serve as chaplain and pastor for the residents. They have become genuine friends, a few of them mentors on my life's journey. One thing has changed however, they no longer say when they first meet me, "You look so young!"

During these 26 years I have had the privilege of meeting four governors, attending many wonderful concerts and picnics, and participating in who knows how many Memorial Day and Veterans Day programs. Of course I have also participated in many sad events such as the funerals of scores of residents and sometimes the funerals of staff members or a member of their families after an unexpected death or tragic accident.

There were also many humorous events. I still have to chuckle when I think of the resident who offered

to back up the van of one of our handicapped residents so that he could get in. The van had hand controls and the resident and the van ended up in the ravine before he could figure out how to operate them. Fortunately no one was hurt.

In addition, I also have many wonderful personal memories relating to the Veterans Home. It was here that five of my children were baptized. Three of them had the Veterans Home paper route when they were older.

I met and married my wife Kathy here. I officiated for the wedding of one of my daughters here as well as the weddings of many staff and a few residents. My mother attended her last worship services here in the chapel. And then there was the Home picnic when my daughter volunteered me to demonstrate my expertise with the hula hoop on stage with J.P. Patches and Gertrude.

Twenty-six years ago the McKinley building stood where our new nursing care building now stands. It was vacant and ready to be demolished. It was, however, an awesome looking building. I found an unlocked door and snuck inside once. It saw wide halls and stairways, high ceilings and large fireplaces. But it had no elevators and was all constructed of wood. In other words, it was a fire trap and had to go.

I hope I'll know when it's time to go. But I hope it won't be for a long time yet. I miss the old buildings but I'm getting used to the new ones. Besides, they're still filled with the same warm people.

WVH Celebrates 96th Anniversary

February 22nd was the 96th anniversary of serving veterans at the Washington Veterans Home. Staff and residents celebrated with a special cake decorated by Bill Shea, with the home logo. A Special Bingo game for the residents, was also a part of the celebration.

(Right)

The WVH Chapel is the oldest building on campus, built in 1914. It's still quite beautiful and very functional for church services as well as other social events. Chaplain Hempel can often be found inside preparing for Sunday services.

